

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TAIPEI 02035 040916Z
ACTION EB-08

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FM AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6958

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E.O. 11652:N/A
TAGS: ETRD, TW
SUBJ: RAISIN IMPORT DUTY REDUCTION

STATE PASS FITZSIMMONDS/FAS/USDA

1. FOLLOWING REPLY RECEIVED IN RESPONSE TO AMBASSADOR UNGER'S FEBRUARY 27 LETTER TO ROC MINISTER OF FINANCE REQUESTING A REDUCTION IN THE IMPORT DUTY ON RAISINS. QUOTE. THANK YOU FOR YOUR LETTER OF FEBRUARY 27, 1978 REGARDING THE REQUEST OF THE U.S. RAISIN INDUSTRY TO REDUCE THE IMPORT DUTY RATES ON RAISINS. WHEN THE IMPORT DUTY FOR RAISINS WAS CHANGED TO A SPECIFIC RATE SYSTEM IN EARLY 1977, THE RATES WERE DETERMINED BASED ON THE AVERAGE U.S. IMPORTED RAISIN C.I.F. PRICES IN 1975 AND 1976, WHICH WERE LOWER THAN THE PRICES PREVAILING IN LATE 1976. SUBSEQUENT DECLINE IN U.S. RAISIN PRICES WOULD NATURALLY OFFSET SOME OF SUCH INITIAL BENEFITS. A PRELIMINARY REVIEW INDICATED THAT RECENT C.I.F. PRICES FOR U.S. IMPORTED RAISINS RANGE FROM NT DOL 54.4/KG TO NT DOL 67.1/KG, WHICH ARE STILL HIGHER THAN NT DOL 40.45/KG FOR BULK RAISINS AND NT DOL 44.31/KG FOR PACKAGED RAISINS USED IN OUR CALCULATION FOR FIXING IMPORT DUTY RATES FOR RAISINS IN EARLY 1977. IT APPEARS THAT THIS MATTER DOES NOT CONSTITUTE UNDUE HARDSHIP FOR THE U.S. RAISIN INDUSTRY. HOWEVER, BASED ON OUR TRADE POLICY TO INCREASE U.S.

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IMPORTS AND TO FURTHER EXPAND THE TRADE VOLUME BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES, WE WOULD BE WILLING TO TAKE THIS MATTER INTO CONSIDERATION IN OUR COMING ANNUAL TARIFF SCHEDULE REVISION PROGRAM TO SEE IF SOME REDUCTION COULD BE EFFECTED. SIGNED, W.H. FEI, MINISTER OF FINANCE, END QUOTE.

2. MINISTER FEI'S ASSURANCE THAT A REDUCTION IN THE

RAISIN IMPORT DUTY WILL BE CONSIDERED DURING THE ANNUAL TARIFF REVIEW IS ENCOURAGING. HOWEVER, THE OUTCOME OF PREVIOUS DELIBERATIONS REGARDING REDUCTIONS IN IMPORT DUTIES ON FOOD ITEMS CONSIDERED AS NONESSENTIAL BY ROC OFFICIALS MUST BE CONSIDERED A BALANCING FACTOR ON THE NEGATIVE SIDE. WHILE SOME ADJUSTMENT IN THE IMPORT DUTY FOR RAISINS MAY BE FORTHCOMING, THIS RESULT IS BY NO MEANS CERTAIN. WE WILL CONTINUE TO PRESS FOR DUTY REDUCTIONS ON APPROPRIATE OCCASIONS AND WILL REPORT PROGRESS AS IT OCCURS. UNGER

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